

Neighborhood Grapevine

News from the City of Milwaukee's
Department of Neighborhood Services

Spring "Sting" Nets 11 More Landlords

Students continue to be a prime source of illegal income for unscrupulous landlords in Milwaukee. Those are the results of a City of Milwaukee spring "sting" operation. A recent second sting by City of Milwaukee inspectors has netted 11 additional landlords operating contrary to municipal code. A similar number were caught 18 months ago. The Department of Neighborhood Services and other City officials announced the names of the landlords who were served citations after being caught offering to rent to an illegal number of students. Unfortunately, for the students, while they risk their financial and personal safety, the landlord pockets their cash. The DNS sting operations hope to reduce illegal landlord behavior.

An ordinance change in 2004, followed by a sting operation created a lull in this type of illegal activity, but according to these results, the money is too hard to resist. City code limits three unrelated persons per apartment or living unit no matter how many bedrooms. Four or more persons are considered a rooming house and that requires a rooming house license. The citations issued carry a potential fine from \$150-\$5000. Given the recurring and pervasive problem, City officials are now asking judges for a higher fine than the typical \$408 fine to offset the lucrative profit that unscrupulous landlords can make.

The high demand for housing near the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee results in a host of high-density issues. Lots of litter, excessive garbage, loss of parking, loud noise and other quality of life items are negatively impacted when illegal rooming houses are allowed to exist.

Rooms rented in basements and attics with one exit can be death traps. Some landlords exploit the high demand and compound the problem to maximize their profits. In addition to the obvious life-safety issues of over-crowding, it can also discourage owner-occupied property and



Start the E-Notify process by clicking on the "Request Services Online" button at the City's Homepage.

Now Buildings Can Talk! E-Notify update now on-line

What would happen if buildings could talk? What would they say? Now they are talking and thousands are listening. It's free and easy to use.

The new feature was added this spring to the City's E-Notify system. It is available to anyone with access to the internet. Now you can have your property contact you when something significant happens. The City's E-Notify System can automatically send you an e-mail whenever DNS receives or issues new documents including recorded ownership, orders, complaints or permits. Here's how:

1. Log in www.city.milwaukee.gov
2. Click on "Request Services Online" in the left hand column.
3. Register your name and email address to get a password.
4. Re-login at step #2 and use your password and follow the instructions.
5. Click on the "E-Notify" button.
6. Select "Location Based Notification" by checking the box and follow the directions to enter an address.
7. After checking the "Completed Entering Addresses" box, remember to click the "Update Notification" button at the top before exiting.

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Pictures from the field: A Success Story?



Q. What's wrong here? Why is this picture considered a success? Would it help if we said this was an 6-family apartment?

Answer: This is a great example of a fire code in action. It's an example of passive fire protection techniques through design. Through the lessons of history, building codes change to improve with each tragedy. This picture taken by Inspector James Swanson demonstrates the effectiveness of a fire separation wall. The alleged story is that a WE Energies worker was working in the basement at the time of a gas leak. A resulting explosion blew away 2-units of the 6-unit complex. A concrete 4-hour wall spared the rest of the structure from possible total collapse. The worker survived. A 4-hour wall means a significant fire can burn on the outside for four hours before the wall assembly will fail. Note the protection extended into the attic area. Fire blocking in the attic is one of the most commonly ignored fire protection measures builders fail to do correctly. While the devastation here is severe, it was limited to 1/3 of the building. It could have been worse if short-cuts or other less thorough techniques were used. Building codes save lives and property when applied correctly. ☺

What are Incremental Improvements and why should I care?

by Martin G. Collins

Twice a year we take stock of the collective creativity of the DNS staff. Each section submits a list of all of the different ways that employees have worked to make our services more effective, less expensive, more customer friendly or in some other way have made an advance in the way things are done. Most of these are small, hence the term, "incremental". Even small improvements that are made to processes that are repeated thousands of time each year add up to a lot!

Why care? We in DNS are in competition for the support of our services with other departments. If you were an Alderman or the Mayor and had a limited number of dollars to address problems, would you put them toward operations with a proven ability to deliver AND which continually become more efficient or would you give them to operations that do things the way they have always been done? Sometime, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" is not the best way because all processes can be made to work better. We in DNS have done this in many ways that you have seen. We have applied technology such as computers and the web to improve on our service delivery. We have improved how we do things by working to get improved code tools and we have done it by cooperating with other agencies of government.

In 1899 the head of the U.S Patent Office proposed closing the operation because everything that could be invented had been invented. Those of you who have been in this and our predecessor departments as long as I have are witnesses to a huge change in how we do our jobs. Think of how employees here in 2031, 25 years from now, will look back at us and think "How did they ever function like that!" The path between here and 2031 is paved by continuous improvement. Some will be huge, but most are but many small steps. Thanks to all of you who have used your ingenuity and creativity to move us forward on that path. The U.S. Patent Office is open and humming and so are we. ☺



The 2006 Anti-Graffiti program was kicked off on June 5th. The theme, "Hey man, Drop the Spray Can" was decorated on numerous art projects on display at City Hall. Mayor Tom Barrett thanked the students from Wisconsin Career Academy High School for their Anti-graffiti message.



L to R: Ellen White, John Kolberg, James Duncan, Eric Upchurch, Angela Pickens, David Polk, Thomas Garza, and Vanessa Boyd

Welcome Aboard to New Hires

by Karen Haack and the New Hires

Ellen White was hired to fill the part-time clerical position in Commercial CE. She started with the city in May, 1999 as a bilingual school secretary. She recently completed the Medical Interpreter program at MATC. Ellen enjoys music, travel, tennis and shopping. **Eric Upchurch** has joined the elevator section. Eric says he is "simply overjoyed to work for the city." His interest's are many and range from ancient history to psychology to quantum physics and foreign languages. **Kyle Krueger** started with the City in August, 2005 as an electrical inspector. He is married to Vicki and has 2 daughters; Hailey is 3-1/2 and Casey is 8 weeks old. He enjoys playing with the children during his free time and bass fishing. **Vanessa Boyd** is an "old" new hire to the City. She has previously worked for the Police and Water departments and can now be found in Property Recording. She is the mother of 3/3/3. That is 3 boys, 3 girls and 3 granddaughters. When not at work, she ministers at her church and is working to establish a choir. She is glad to be part of the DNS team. **Angela Pickens** was hired as an Office Assistant II for the Electrical Section in November. She has worked for MPS and has been with the City for about 9 years. She is the mother of three lovely children: a 15-1/2 year old daughter, 9-1/2 year old son and in March, 2006 gave birth to a 9 lb. 11 oz. baby boy. She is a returning student to Mt. Mary College majoring in Business /Professional Communications. **Jim Winterhalter** is a new Cross-Connection inspector in Plumbing. Jim is married with three kids and he enjoys fishing.

Promotions and Retirements

In the world of promotions, **Tim Bolger**, former Commercial Inspector has joined the Construction Section. **Hal Jenkins**, former Plumbing Inspector was promoted to Cross-Connection Assistant Supervisor. **Angela Ferrill** is a new Zoning Inspector.



L to R : Teresa Ramos-Mani is a new Plumbing Secretary, David Polk a new plumbing inspector and Almira Trotter another new Plumbing Secretary.

Sue Sloniker is the new Court Enforcement Inspector and **Larry Woytek** has joined the ranks of Commercial Code Enforcement. **Jennifer Klouda** is now a Special Enforcement Inspector and **John Kolberg** and **James Duncan** have become the newest Nuisance Control Officers. **Kathy Kendzierski** and **Raphiel Cole** are now Program Assistant II's. Kathy works for Residential and Raphiel for vacant lot maintenance.

May and June saw many changes down at Lake Tower. **Candice Maynard** retired after 30 years of city service. **Dave Krey** is now the new supervisor of Residential Code Enforcement. **Don Schaeve** has been promoted to Nuisance and Environmental Manager. And **Al Garcia** retired with 30 plus years of service.

The plumbing section saw the following people retire **Mary Ann Schultz**, and **Mark Krowski**. Mark had spent his entire career with the City, over 30 years in the plumbing section. First as an inspector and later as the assistant supervisor.

And last but not least, elevator inspector **Charles Duffy** has retired and **Alex Bowers** left the Commercial Section to join Forestry. ☺

E-Notify for Inspectors

by Carolyn Wood

DNS also has an e-notify service for inspectors! When inspectors go into the Neighborhood Services System (NSS), the system automatically checks to see if there have been any ownership changes on properties that have open orders. If there have been any changes to ownership records, an "E-notify for inspector" window will appear which contains the addresses and violation serial numbers.

Enotify for inspector							
Insp	Address	MPROP/Recrdg#	Serial#	InspDate	Compl Date	Status	Hide
JWYSOC	2924 S 9TH ST	M	5421341	01/24/06	06/30/06	X Extended w/ouho	▲
JWYSOC	2924 S 9TH ST	M	5421342	01/24/06	06/30/06	U Unabated	▲
JWYSOC	2956 S 9TH PL	M	5269022	09/27/05	04/15/06	U Unabated	▲
JWYSOC	825 W MANITOBA ST	M	5258621	09/22/05	05/15/06	E Compliance date	▲
JWYSOC	825 W MANITOBA ST	M	5258622	09/22/05	05/15/06	E Compliance date	▲
JWYSOC	2912 S 12TH ST	M	5281451	10/10/05	04/15/06	U Unabated	▼
JWYSOC	2912 S 12TH ST	M	5281452	10/10/05	04/15/06	U Unabated	▼
JWYSOC	2846 S 14TH ST	R 104866	5285681	10/12/05	04/15/06	E Compliance date	▼
JWYSOC	2846 S 14TH ST	R 104866	5285682	10/12/05	04/15/06	U Unabated	▼
MPROP Prior		MPROP Current					
AGNES E EINARSON		SERGIO GARCIA MACIAS					
		MARIA A GARCIA					
2924 S 9TH ST		2924 S 9TH ST		532150000			
MILWAUKEE WI		MILWAUKEE, WI					
F5:Hide/Unhide F7:Property F8:Violations F9:Quickview Esc:Done							

This alert helps inspectors respond quickly to ownership changes which is important because such changes impact order enforcement.

The e-notify screen also displays the violation inspection date, compliance date and current status. For each record, if the MPROP ownership has changed, there will be an "M" in the MPROP/Recording column; below, NSS displays the "MPROP Prior" and "MPROP Current." If the DNS recording has changed, there will be a recording application # in the MPROP/Recording column, and the Quickview button below will be highlighted so inspectors can quickly view the changed recording information.

When inspectors have dealt with the ownership issues, they can select "Hide" to hide the row, so that it doesn't reappear the next time they enter NSS.

This innovation was inspired by inspectors' comments to the Commissioner about the problem of post-order ownership changes. ☺

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artificially inflate property values. The landlords served citations are:

<u>Violator</u>	<u>Violator Res.</u>	<u>Address of Violation</u>
1. James Wiechmann (Weichmann Enterp.)	Milwaukee	2310 E. Bradford
2. Rebecca Schmidt	Milwaukee	2434 N. Palmer
3. Oded Ish Shalom	Milwaukee	2434 N. Cramer
4. Jennifer Green	Milwaukee	1726 E. Linnwood
5. Robert Bacos	Greendale	2437 N. Murray
6. Mike Dindorf	Milwaukee	2870 N. Fratney
7. Ron Lee	Milwaukee	2637 N. Holton
8. Mike de Vogel	Milwaukee	1450 N. Humboldt
9. Tosha L. Scott (Milwaukee Rents LLC)	Milwaukee	2608 N. Bartlett
10. Robert Zellmer (Action Property Man.)	Milwaukee	1969 N. Farwell
11. Jason Kahne (Safire Limited LLC)	West Bend	522 E. Meinecke

City officials attending the news conference included Alderman Michael D'Amato and DNS Commissioner Martin Collins. Alderman D'Amato noted the impact this illegal behavior has on artificially spiking real estate values in the area. "The landlords, because they rent to more people, they get more rent, and the housing market begins to artificially get too expensive and that drives out owner occupants."

Speaking in support of the sting were University officials. They are taking their own action in support of the City by banning the convicted landlords from their student rental website operated by the University.

Students are often the ultimate victims. The new code hopes to pre-empt that outcome. Typically, once a unit is rented and a landlord is caught, they have been known to simply evict the extra tenants, leaving the remaining students to pay the entire rent. The current ordinance makes it illegal to make the OFFER to rent to more than 3 unrelated persons in an unlicensed facility. A second conviction under the new ordinance may result in all the tenants being evicted, as the owner would have to reapply for an Occupancy Permit. That



UW-Milwaukee Officials, Commissioner Collins, Alderman D'Amato and Assistant City Attorney Unora speak at a news conference about landlords preying on student renters.

process could take up to two months. Meanwhile, students may face the additional hardship of looking for a new place to live in mid-semester.

All home owners in the area have a stake in the problem through above average taxes. Property values escalate artificially resulting in higher property taxes. Thanks to the illegal profits that can be made in over-renting multi-unit apartments in the University area, code compliant landlords and owner occupants are out-bid when units go up for sale, resulting in the negative condition of a high absentee landlord rate.

Commissioner Collins said most landlords are honest hard working people. But for the few who would rather make a fast buck, they'll never know if it is an eager student or a DNS staffer starting a new sting.

Further information about these and any Milwaukee properties is available at www.milwaukee.gov/dns. To report an overcrowding condition, call the Department of Neighborhood Services at 286-2268. ☺

Speak E-Z from page 1

With location based information you can also set a "range" and get hits within a 600 ft., 1000 ft., or a half-mile. Thus you can follow what's happening around the neighborhood!

How can this help a landlord? Owners can monitor their property from anywhere there is access to the internet. They will be among the first to know if a problem pops up. They could make repairs before an order is issued. They can monitor the neighborhood for development trends by tracking permits. Property insurance carriers can "subscribe" to their policy holders addresses and monitor the conditions of the property. Neighborhood and community groups could learn the latest on progress on problem properties.

Banks can monitor loans for "flippers" or people changing ownership on recorded property. Prospective tenants can "shop" a neighborhood before moving there, monitoring the degree of violations or development changes. Contractors could enter a range around current work sites and see if new violations or permits are

posted. Persons making complaints can monitor the progress DNS is making regarding their complaint. The uses are many.

The e-mail that is sent contains a "plain english" explanation of what has occurred and a direct link to the actual record mentioned. In one-click you can read word for word the detail of the record.

The system takes all of the e-notify requests and matches them with updated records overnight. At 5 AM the next morning the e-mails are sent.

At the E-notify site, you can now also "subscribe" to many other City updates including meeting agendas and hearings. You can also make electronic "complaints". The system provides a list of common service request and complaint items like garbage or nuisance junk automobiles.

The City hopes this quick access to information will shorten the time it takes to correct code violations and better educate consumers making property investment decisions. Learn how to make your buildings speak E-Z. Sign-up for E-Notify today.

Further information about DNS services and programs can be found at www.milwaukee.gov/dns. ☺



Another full house for Landlord Training at the Police Academy this spring. To register call 286-2954

"The City of Milwaukee's Landlord Training Program Leverages Private Investment in the City"

The Landlord Training Program leverages millions of dollars of private mortgage investment for Milwaukee neighborhoods. The program is a requirement for purchases of duplexes for many homeownership initiatives, including:

- First-time homebuyer, affordable mortgage programs by many Milwaukee-area banks
- Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac "My Community" and "Community Gold" mortgage initiatives
- The State of Wisconsin "HODAP" downpayment and closing cost grant program
- The City of Milwaukee's American Dream Downpayment Initiative (ADDI)
- The Chicago Federal Home Loan Bank Homeownership Program subsidies (AHP).

The program has helped hundreds of families purchase duplex homes as their own home, reducing the number of duplexes that are absentee-owned and less well maintained.

Ms. Karin Long, coordinator of the program stated: "We are not landlord advocates, we are not tenant advocates, we are advocates for a strong, healthy and safe community for all." This pro community stance is the reason the program has been so successful.

In 2005 the Landlord Training Program trained 1,606 landlords representing 15,263 rental units. To date the program has trained 15,500 landlords/property managers representing 211,415 rental units.

Ms. Karin Long coordinates the program and Ms. Denise Mueller is the Program Assistant II. ☺

Sign-up for the FREE Landlord Training Program

**call for the latest class schedule
414-286-2954**

**or go on-line at
www.milwaukee.gov/dns**

Eastside Landlord Fined \$34,200

Municipal Judge Valerie Hill sentenced a Milwaukee landlord today to forfeit \$34,200 in fines for failure to make repairs to six properties mostly on Milwaukee's east-side. It is the 26th conviction of landlord Timothy J. Olson, 1737 N. Palmer St., in three years. The properties had 50 uncorrected violations dating back to 2005. The violations included defective plumbing and electrical systems, as well as life safety issues and maintenance items.

The violation addresses are:

1227 N. Milwaukee St.
2314 W. Wells St.
2322 N. Richards St.
2804 W. Kilbourn Ave.
843 N. 24th St.
1543 N. Van Buren St.

Tim Olson is no stranger to municipal court fines. He paid a \$10,000 fine earlier this year for failure to correct other code violations. Mr. Olson owns or manages approximately 88 properties in Milwaukee. He operates under about 28 various corporate LLC names.

New orders will be issued on the unfinished work. If not completed in time, the Department of Neighborhood Services will decide the next level of enforcement which could include more court action or reinspection fees. If Olson fails to pay the fines the City will seek an arrest warrant for non-payment.

The Department of Neighborhood Services reminds landlords they can avoid costly management mistakes by attending a FREE Landlord Training Program. The class provides techniques for dealing with legal issues, removing illegal tenant activity as well as best practices for efficient property management. Call the DNS Landlord Training Program at 286-2954. ☺

Vandal that Tagged Jail Cell Gets to Stay in Jail for 18 Months Plus

Troy Mosby was handed a harsh sentence for causing \$13,650 in graffiti damage in Milwaukee in addition to \$650 in damage for tagging his jail cell while awaiting sentencing. The 20-year old Wauwatosa man is to serve 18 months in State prison, 24 months in the House of Correction and 42 months of probation for his graffiti crimes.

Before Judge Van Grunsven pronounced the sentence, he read in to the record the letters, testimonies and impact statements from residents whose homes and businesses have been defaced and scarred by the impact of graffiti. While Mosby's parents appealed for mercy the judge concluded; the public has a right to be free from senseless destruction, graffiti damage is not easily repaired, the effects of graffiti are emotional and economical, and finally, that prison can provide resources that better address Mosby's needs.

Many City resources helped to bring the tagger, whose street name was "Syrup", to justice. Thanks to the incredibly hard work of assistant District Attorney Nancy Ettenheim and police officer Todd Kaul. Thanks to Ald. Donovan, and Zielinski, DNS Inspector Sharon Blando, John Ivy from DPW, Steve Fendt from SOC, and Don Sargent from Riverworks who all contributed to bringing this case to justice. ☺



KGMB Creating Anti-Litter Ambassadors

by Don Schaewe

The City of Milwaukee's Department of Neighborhood Services – Nuisance Section is partnering with Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful with a special "summer school" session.

The goal is to work with children that live within the Oklahoma to 37th street to Oakland to Burleigh range. Some areas in this range are having issues with community involvement in and working with appropriate departments.

An expansion of our Waste-In-Place school program, the Neighborhood Ambassador is a new project-based program. Here are some of the highlights.

- Students, grades 3rd – 6th, became Neighborhood Ambassadors and they will "monitor" their neighborhoods throughout the summer.

- Neighborhood Ambassador Packet included: DNS brochure, Keep it Clean/Great American Cleanup brochure, Clean & Green Flyer, Every Drop Counts brochure, "What Can I do About Litter?" flyer, recycled pencil, cloth Frisbee inside recycle bag.

- Department of Neighborhood services provided \$10,000 dollars to include multiple visits, transportation for school and Neighborhood Ambassador Packet materials.

- Over 724 students' pledged to participate in this program.

- Neighborhood Ambassador info will be added to KGMB's website. It will have an explanation of the program with pictures of classrooms and an information link.

Participating schools in the program include the Lincoln Center of Arts, Lincoln Ave School, Greenfield Elementary, Urban Day School, Longfellow Elementary, Riley School, Bethune Academy, Townsend Elementary, Hayes Bilingual School/S.C.O.R.E.S., Humboldt Park, John Muir, Hmong American Peace Academy, U.S. Grant Elementary, and Messmer Preparatory Catholic School. ☺

Commissioner's Corner

ACCOUNTABILITY IN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

by DNS Commissioner

Martin G. Collins



Mayor Barrett introduced the Accountability In Management Program (A.I.M.) program in 2006. Patterned after Baltimore's City-Stats program, it is a monthly review of departmental performance data by the Mayor and several other administrative staff to try to improve City services and lower costs. DNS is one of the first two departments to start the process as our data is among the most comprehensive and retrievable in the City system.

We are still in the shakedown phase of getting agreements on what data to include and to agree about what it means. This year's theme is customer service. Accordingly, some of the data we will be looking at will include the time it takes to respond to complaints, the number of appeals and our success rate and our success rate in municipal court. There will also be monthly reporting on production type data, such as the number and time spent doing inspections as well as financial data such as revenue.

Numbers never show the entire picture. Customer service means more than appeals and timely responses. It also means how we treat people in the course of carrying out our daily responsibilities. As an enforcement agency that spends a substantial part of its time responding to complaints, we rarely make both sides in a dispute happy. We are in the business of changing people's spending priorities and that is never easy. While we cannot give everyone what they want, we can strive to treat them civilly, with courtesy and respect in the process.

We all encounter unhappy people in this job and the best advice I can give is to use the Golden Rule: Treat others the way you would want to be treated if you were in their shoes. When people vent on us, it is very rarely a personal attack, even though it may sound like it at the time. Remembering that Rule when you are being yelled at for doing your job is rarely easy, but it does help to keep one's composure. Ask yourself "Would I like to be yelled back at if I were in their shoes or would I appreciate a sympathetic and calm voice explaining to me what my options are and help guiding me through a process that I probably do not understand all that well?". Please examine your own interactions with the public that we serve. How well do you measure up to the Golden Rule? ☺

Need Help Finding a DNS form?

All of DNS forms, brochures and documents are available on the Public Information Section of the DNS web site at:

www.milwaukee.gov/dns